

Testimony of Thomas R Kelly

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RE: LD 1941.

Dear Judiciary Committee members:

I write to support LD 1941, which would re-establish Parol in the state.

Build motivation into the system. Hope is better than despair. Establishing parole will provide folks with prison sentences over 5 years in length motivation, while in prison, to work toward rehabilitation. Current early reentry programs don't apply to prisoners with these lengthier prison sentences. Those with the longest sentences can despair of hope to better their lives. An institutional parole system will help to provide incentives for them to renew their lives.

I have seen education reintroduce light into the lives of prisoners. Educational resources will be part of the key to success. I work with prisoners across the country who take correspondence courses through Maine-based College Guild, seeking to better themselves. Assignment after assignment present to me prisoners who are working toward a better life. Long-term prisoners often write with the open-eyed desires of high schoolers, as they look toward reentry. We can provide renewed hope and motivation to folks seeking to become better citizens.

The state should keep up its efforts to provide resources for prisoners to make their lives better. Reintroducing parole does not create the educational resources in prison, but it increases the chance that prisoners will participate and have a positive outlook when those resources are available.

Reentry will be more effective. Post-release supervision through a parole system can help make reentry more successful and should reduce recidivism.

Let's seek to encourage the positive parts of prisoners' selves by providing them something for which to strive. If the bill become law, many of those with long sentences gain the ability to make their lives better. Motivation arising from shortening one's sentence can call to the fore the best instincts of Maine prisoners.

Victims will not be ignored. The bill provides strong measures provide victims a voice in the process.

Now is the time. The bill is the result of committee recommendations.

I strongly approve of the bill, LD 1941.